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RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY 1411
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 6366
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0203
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0679
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0217
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0416
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0252
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RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0931
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0466

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000520

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SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT - SEPTEMBER 19, 2007

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¶1. (C) Summary from the NAC Meeting:

-- Afghanistan: The Secretary General)- supported by U.S. and UK)- urged the Military Committee to resolve breaks of silence on the ISAF contract helicopter lift initiative; The Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) reported he was assured of Australia's commitment to ISAF during recent trip to Canberra; SHAPE urged nations to provide soldiers with better counter-IED training prior to deployment; UK briefed on seized Iranian weaponry shipments to the Taliban.

-- Balkans: The SYG announced that the Troika will brief the NAC the week of October 15; the NAC will hold an informal discussion in early October on the implications for KFOR of likely post-December 10 Kosovo scenarios; NATO will provide cluster munitions data to Serbia next week.

-- Darfur: The Portuguese PermRep informed the Council that

Chad has accepted the deployment of international peacekeepers to eastern Chad.

-- Iraq: CMC announced that NTM-I started to conduct naval training for Iraqi senior non-commissioned officers aboard a British ship off the coast of Iraq.

-- AOB: The CMC reported that CHODs agreed at their September 9-10 meeting to approve &Option II8 for reforming the NRF, which calls for graduated force levels, and reached a compromise agreement on Phase I of the Peacetime Establishment review.

END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Afghanistan: Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer expressed worry at the breaks of silence by two nations (comment: France and Spain) in the Military Committee (MC), which threaten MC approval of a proposal that would common-fund contract helicopter transport lift for ISAF and address one of the mission's longstanding weaknesses. He implored nations to resolve the breaks of silence urgently. In their later interventions, both Ambassador Nuland and UK Ambassador Eldon strongly supported the SYG, with Ambassador Nuland also noting the beneficial effect the initiative could have by eventually providing lift for ANA units to do more. The SYG also informed Allies he would attend a high-level JCMB meeting with UN SYG Ban and President Karzai on the margins of the UNGA on September 23. He also urged relevant nations to support ISAF's UN mandate renewal, currently under negotiation in the Security Council.

¶3. (C) CMC Henault briefed on his recent trip to Australia, the first ever by a Chairman. He stated the Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, and CHOD all assured him of Australia's firm commitment to ISAF, and noted the likelihood of Australia extending its mandate beyond its current expiration date of March 2009. He described Australian satisfaction with their relationship with the Netherlands in Uruzgan, but concern at overall force levels in RC-South and the ability of the Taliban to return to areas cleared by ISAF in the absence of capable Afghan security forces. Australia is the 10th largest contributor to ISAF and the leading contributor among NATO partners.

¶4. (C) Alluding to September 19 press reports of a new major ISAF operation in the South, SHAPE DCOS for Operations MG Wright noted to PermReps this was just a continuation of ongoing operations in the Upper Gereshk Valley. He told the NAC that the sub-national consultations portion of developing a final Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) had been

USNATO 00000520 002 OF 003

completed, and the ANDS was on track to be issued in March 2008: ISAF had received a list of priority development projects from the Afghan government. He also stated that with a recent agreement allowing USAID to share data with ISAF's Afghan Country Stability Picture database and with new additional staffing, the ACSP database would be an even greater tool for mapping development progress across Afghanistan. MG Wright supported the SYG by re-emphasizing the importance of the helicopter initiative to ISAF's operational success, and urged nations to do better on counter-IED training for personnel deploying to Afghanistan. IEDs are the most lethal threat to ISAF personnel, he stated, and nations continue to send personnel to the theater with inadequate training. Training is a national responsibility according to NATO doctrine, Wright said, but NATO would start developing its own counter-IED training syllabus in view of the training's importance and weaknesses in Allied nation programs.

¶5. (S) UK Ambassador Eldon gave a lengthy brief on the September 6 interdiction by ISAF forces of a munitions shipment from Iran into Afghanistan containing Explosively Formed Penetrator (EFP) technology. He said analysis of the

munitions)- including observation of the shipment crossing the Iranian-Afghan border -- showed a clear link to Iran and weapons the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force has sent to insurgents in Iraq. Ambassador Eldon asserted the IRGC Qods Force has made several arms shipments to Afghanistan, that it maintains a strategic relationship with the Taliban, and that it may have attempted to conceal its activities from other branches of the Iranian government. He stated the UK has talked with the Afghan government and the Afghans realize the serious nature of the issue.

¶ 6. (C) Ambassador Nuland thanked the UK for the Iran brief, and urged Allies with influence in Tehran to pressure the Iranians on this issue. Supporting the SYG's comments on the fate of the ISAF helicopter initiative within the Military Committee, she urged a fix prior to the Noordwijk informal defense ministerial, lest it become a big issue among Ministers. She cited U.S. success with the contracting concept in RC-East, as well as the initiative's follow-on benefits for ANA mobility. Supporting the Canadian Ambassador, who asked for more NAC discussion on police training, she suggested a joint brief to the NAC by CSTC-A Commander MG Cone and the new head of the EUPOL mission in Afghanistan (whose role Belgium highlighted).

¶ 7. (C) Other interventions saw the Dutch Ambassador brief on recent trips to Afghanistan by his Prime Minister and Development Minister. He noted the Dutch PM urged Karzai to strengthen the ANSF presence in Uruzgan, and the Development Minister announced an additional 15 million euro in aid. The UK also requested more information on what precisely ISAF is doing against narcotics, within the confines of the OPLAN. The Spanish Ambassador seconded the request, going further, requesting information on any new CN Standard Operating Procedures issued by ISAF. The Belgian Ambassador flagged that the NAC had agreed with SACEUR in July that SHAPE would provide regular updates to the NAC on the status of ongoing investigations into civilian casualty incidents, but that the NAC had yet to see an update. He also suggested that SCR Everts might usefully report on the interaction of PRTs with local governments, given Karzai's recent statements discouraging governors from cooperating too closely with PRTs. The SYG agreed such a report could be useful.

¶ 8. (C) Balkans: The SYG briefed that the Troika is meeting separately with the negotiating parties in London and will report the results of those meetings to the Contact Group. The meetings will lead into next week's Contact Group

USNATO 00000520 003 OF 003

ministerial in New York on September 27 where the parties will meet face-to-face following the ministerial. The SYG will attend the ministerial and will update the Council upon his return. The SYG informed the Council that he is scheduling a NAC with the Troika during the week of October 15 prior to NATO's informal defense ministerial. He mentioned that recent Serbian rhetoric rejecting future NATO membership, attributed to Prime Minister Kostunica, is likely the result of their internal domestic political dynamic. The SYG stated his intention not to engage in a public debate with Serbian leaders over the comments, but will discuss them privately in a phone call with Serbian President Tadic and in his meeting with Serbian Foreign Minister Jeremic next week in New York.

¶ 9. (C) Lastly, the SYG informed the Council that he intends to hold an informal NAC discussion in early October on the implications for NATO of possible scenarios following the Troika December 10 report to the UN SYG.

¶ 10. (C) The CMC briefed the Council that COMKFOR deployed KFOR's multi-national specialized unit to the northern part of Kosovo in order to increase KFOR's visibility and its cooperation with UNMIK and the KPS. The Spanish, Portuguese, and the Norwegian PermReps strongly supported the SYG's approach to Belgrade's recent anti-NATO comments. The

Spanish PermRep, while not objecting to an informal NAC discussion of Kosovo, called on Allied unity not to be influenced by &rumored8 Kosovar intentions for December, which should not affect Allied and UN thinking. In response to the Norwegian PermRep,s inquiry, the SYG announced that next week NATO will provide Serbia with the data it requested on cluster munition dropped in southern Serbia during Operation Allid Force.

¶11. (C) Darfur: The Portuguese PermRep informed the Council that Chad has accepted the deployment of international peacekeepers to eastern Chad in support of the mission to Darfur.

¶11. (C) Iraq: CMC announced that NTM-I has the resources and is starting to conduct naval training for Iraqi senior non-commissioned officers aboard a British ship off the coast of Iraq.

¶13. (C) AO: CMC reported that CHODs made progress on two recommendations at their September 9-10 meeting in Canada. First, CHODSs accepted &Option II8 for reforming the NRF, which calls for graduated force levels. The issue would go to the NAC with the goal of presenting it for a final decision by Defense Ministers at the Noordwijk ministerial. Second, HODS reached a compromise agreement on Phase I of the Peacetime Establishment review. An MCM document was released under short silence procedure to expire COB September 17. He noted that many of the more difficult issues would have to be addressed in Phase II and urged nations to remain flexible.

¶14. (C) In an informal session, the CHODs also discussed operations in Afghanistan and the effect of governance on operations, the need for a true Comprehensive Approach, the need to develop the ANA and ANP and for more embedded trainers (OMLTs), and the importance of strategic communication.

NULAND